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By Betty Diop

“If you can make it in New York City, then you can make it anywhere”. New York is “The City that Never Sleeps”. But what are the elements that really define New York? People who do not live in the Big Apple and have never been in New York, judge this city by what they hear. Underneath all those stories and myths lies what really makes New York City what it is. The people, the buildings, the structures, and the cultures complete New York and make it the great metropolis that it is today.

One myth associated with New York is that New Yorkers are primarily interested in making money. Yet as I look around, all I see are people of all races trying to get by in life. Everybody goes about their day with strangers that they see daily but rarely exchange two words with. It is not that they are arrogant or because they do not care, it is probably because they have other things on their minds. The person sitting adjacent to you on the train or bus could be struggling in their life. In a shallow world that revolves around money, making some cash is really the only way to survive.

The fact that New York gives people opportunities to make money is most likely what attracts people to New York. New York is known as the “City that Never Sleeps” because there is not any time to sleep when New Yorker’s are always so busy. There is just so much to do and it does not make anybody selfish if they care more about their well being than the person besides them on a train or bus. The truth is that ever body’s just trying to survive and make it in life. We all have our own personal issues and to say that New Yorker’s only care about making money because they’re selfish is hypocritical.

Another element associated with New York is its buildings and structures. When you hear the words Empire State Building, you would naturally think of New York. When I hear the words Statue of Liberty, one of the terms that pop up in my head is New York City. The Statue of Liberty promises freedom which promotes immigration. The mass of people entering the United States have only contributed to this great metropolis. Some of the things New York stands for are opportunities and ideas. If you take the time to observe your surroundings you will notice many buildings and structures that New York’s inventive minds have created. I think that these buildings and structures have helped to make New York famous. They have added to the list of elements that define New York.

The variety of people in this city has played a part in New York’s mixture of cultures. Everybody who comes here adds something new to New York. This is a good thing but it can also be a bad thing. The negative aspects of New York are occasionally forgotten when people refer to New York. Hip-hop and rap are a major part of New York’s culture. This music does not have to be a bad thing, but it is a contributor to the violence on the streets. Most rappers have been in jail before and I think that the influence they have on some fans isn’t very good. One of the first things that I associate New York with is violence and crime. On the streets you see graffiti on walls and buildings, you see fights, and hear people with their rap music turned up high while driving in their cars. On the news you hear about rape, murder, and violence sometimes caused by kids in gangs. These are also characteristics that define New York.

When I think of New York, I think of the different people, the violence, the buildings, the crime, and opportunities. I believe that New York has lived up to the name: one of the greatest cities in the United States. Like all metropolises, it has its good and bad qualities. But those are the factors that make New York what it is. New York City is busy, crowded, wild, crazy, dangerous, and so much more. You can stand at a window sill and look down at the city below you and see the cars, the people, the billboards, but still never fully grasp everything that is New York. But like they say, if you can make it in New York, you can make it anywhere.